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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

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The Office Action mailed January 17, 2007 has been carefully considered. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 10, and 17 have been amended to further particularly point out and distinctly claim subject matter regarded as the invention. Support for these changes may be found in the specification, original claims, and figures. Claim 5 has been amended to correct typographical matters. No new matter has been added.

Claims 16 and 20 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

New claims 21-26 also particularly point out and distinctly claim subject matter regarded as the invention. Support for these claims may be found in the specification and figures, such as in paragraphs [0085] - [0095], [0187], and Figs. 1-1(d). No new matter has been added.

Record of Interview

On January 14, 2007, an interview was conducted by telephone between Examiner Susanna Meinecke Diaz and Adrienne Yeung, Reg. No. 44,000. Applicant and Applicant's Attorney thanks the Examiner for granting this interview. Claims 1-20 were discussed over prior art references Crevelt and Feinberg.

The 35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejection

Claims 1-15 and 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a,e) as being allegedly anticipated by Crevelt et al. (UPS 5,902,983). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claims 1, 10, and 17 are independent claims.

According to the M.P.E.P. §2131, a claim is anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a), (b) and (e) only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.

The office action states:

"Crevelt discloses a system for monitoring player financial transactions in a gaming environment for tracking player loss comprising: a plurality of gaming device (Fig. 2; col. 4, lines 54-60; col. 6, lines 49-53); a financial transaction host ... (Figs. 1, 2; col. 5, lines 36-40 -- Each gaming machine may provide player tracking information and accounting information to the local area network; col. 5, lines 45-52; col. 6, lines 3-9; col. 8, lines 18-61; col. 9, lines 58-65; col. 10, line 55 through col. 11, line 9); and means for determining a player's financial loss from said financial information (col. 3, lines 8-18; col. 5, lines 36-40 -- Each gaming machine may provide player tracking information and accounting information to the local area network; col. 5, lines 45-52; col. 6, lines 3-9; col. 8, lines 18-61; col. 9, lines 58-65; col. 10, line 15 through col. 11, line 9)."

Applicant respectfully disagrees for the reasons, among others, discussed below.

Amended Claim 1 provides for the following feature: "means for determining a player's financial loss from said financial information, wherein a player is prevented from playing the plurality of gaming devices based upon a predetermined criteria and the player's financial loss." Independent Claims 10 and 17 provide for similar features.

As provided in the Specification, the "player loss information can be used by a player to self-regulate their activities, or by a casino, such as for enforcing play regulations." If a "request for funds [by the player] exceeds a predetermined amount in a predetermined period of time, the casino may seek to contact the player and prevent their further play. In addition, the casino may prevent the player from seeking additional funds via the system." (Specification, [0030] and [0186]). Thus, based upon the player's financial loss, the player may be prohibited from further play either to enforce play regulations for a specific jurisdiction and/or to prevent a player from losing lots of money without the casino being aware of the loss. Additionally, the player may be prevented from obtaining additional funds to play any of the gaming machines.

Crevelt teaches "an EFT system that allows cashless transfers of funds to gaming machines and yet protects against rash decisions by some players to divert large amounts of their savings to gaming." (Col. 2, lines 25-28). Crevelt accomplishes this by:

"providing a gaming machine with apparatus necessary to send 'limited' fund requests to and receive authorizations from an EFT system. Specifically, all such requests for funds are limited to a preset amount. Thus, if a player uses an EFT transfer to obtain playing credit, that credit will be limited to the preset amount. For example, if a player is playing a quarter slot machine, the preset credit may be twenty dollars, while if the player is playing a dollar slot machine, the preset credit may be one hundred dollars. In practice, the player will insert his or her ATM card (debit card), key in a PIN number, request playing credit, and receive the preset amount of such credit. The player will not be given the opportunity to select an amount of playing credit other than the preset amount. Thus, the player is unlikely to financially over extend himself or herself when playing a gaming machine of this invention because there is a conscious decision made each time more funds are required to continue game play once a player has used up previously credited amounts." (Col. 3, lines 31-49).

Thus, the gaming machine simply has a preset playing limit that will prohibit the player from playing more than that amount. In fact, the player is able to play the same or another gaming machine with a preset playing limit. The player is not prevented from playing additional funds. Rather, the preset playing limit causes the player to make a conscious decision each time more funds are required to continue game play once the previously credited amounts are used up. Thus, Crevelt does not teach "means for determining a player's financial loss from said financial information, wherein a player is prevented from playing the plurality of gaming devices based upon a predetermined criteria and the player's financial loss" as claimed in independent Claim 1.

Since Crevelt does not teach each and every element as set forth in independent Claims 1, 10 or 17, it can not be said to anticipate the claimed invention. As to dependent claims 2-9, 11-15, and 18-20, the argument set forth above is equally applicable here since they depend from independent claims 1, 10, or 17. The base claims being allowable, the dependent claims must also be allowable. It is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

The 35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 16 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Crevelt in view of Feinberg (USP 5,910,048). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claims 16 and 20 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. It is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

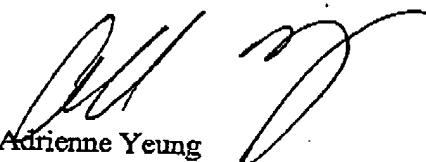
In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully asserted that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

It is believed that this Amendment places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Early favorable consideration of this Amendment is earnestly solicited and Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

Accordingly, it is believed that no fees are due in connection with the filing of this Amendment. However, if it is determined that any fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 500388 (Order No.IGT1P130X2).

Respectfully submitted,
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